

Writing Samples/Creative Projects (Sample Practicum Assignment)

What is the purpose of this exercise?

Writing samples allow you to demonstrate your writing ability to your school and your future employers. In this information age, writing is one of the most important skills to master. The ability to put your thoughts on paper in a clear and concise manner is a skill that must be practiced throughout your life. This is an opportunity for you to show others how well you can communicate in writing.

What type of writing sample should I include in my portfolio?

The type of writing sample you prepare should highlight the type of writing skills appropriate to the career field you hope to enter. For example, students hoping to pursue a career in journalism should include articles they have written.

Regardless of what is prepared as a writing sample, the final product should be clear, professional, and appropriate to the professional field. There is no specific length requirement; it should be as long as necessary to clearly get your point across. Make sure that your writing sample is unique to your interests and ideas, something that grabs the reader's attention early and quickly gives the points you are trying to make. Consider submitting a sample of the writing you are completing in your practicum (remember to get permission from your office if there is a question of confidentiality.) This also gives you a chance to receive feedback from other professionals on your writing style and writing skills. It is preferred that your writing sample be something you completed at work.

Some Advice

Find a job announcement in the field in which you wish to work someday (it doesn't necessarily have to be an entry-level position) that calls for applicants to submit a writing sample. Analyze what the job entails and tailor your writing sample accordingly. You can even revise a work product as practice for this exercise.

What if my practicum does not require or allow me to demonstrate my analytical writing skills?

Not every practicum or set of learning goals will encompass activities that involve the creation of analytical writing samples. In such cases, in order for the intern to receive credit for this component, the Interdepartmental Studies Program advises the intern to include an essay written on one's own that represents a reflection of the ongoing nature of the practicum, similar to that of a journal. Such a journal might include a discussion of certain "critical incidents," which are certain highlights, challenges, discoveries, turning points, or other events that occurred during the practicum that resulted in the intern developing, changing, adopting, or discovering a point of view about the experience. For example, discussing how the first week of work progressed, how the intern handled some tough assignments and was successful or unsuccessful in doing so, or how the intern reacted to some surprising events or activities at work.

Alternatively, or in addition, the intern may want to demonstrate his/her creative achievements through a series of photos or drawings, clippings, or other documentary evidence. For example, a fine arts intern who learns how to choreograph a new dance routine might include photos from a performance. An intern in law enforcement may include a photo of oneself training in the martial arts.

The main idea is that the intern needs to document the learning that is taking place as comprehensively as follows. While most interns will find that writing samples are sufficient, creativity and involvement in activities that do not require extensive writing can also be included.